

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

March 8, 2021

9:03 a.m.

9:03:27 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Bishop called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Click Bishop, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senator Donny Olson
Senator Natasha von Imhof
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator David Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman

ALSO PRESENT

Emma Torkelson, Staff, Senator Josh Revak; Erin Shine, Staff, Co-Chair Bishop;

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Senator Josh Revak, Sponsor; Eddie Grasser, Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Department of Fish and Game; Rhonda Boyles, Appointee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees; Brent Fisher, Appointee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees; Annette Gwalthney-Jones, Appointee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees; Anita Halterman, Appointee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees;

SUMMARY

SB 19 EXTEND SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCY

SB 19 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

SB 22 INTENSIVE MGMT SURCHARGE/REPEAL TERM DATE

SB 22 was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Fish and Game.

Confirmation of Governor's Appointees: Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees

Rhonda Boyles
Brent Fisher
Annette Gwalthney-Jones
Anita Halterman

Co-Chair Bishop discussed housekeeping.

#sb22

SENATE BILL NO. 22

"An Act repealing the termination date for the intensive management hunting license surcharge."

9:04:51 AM

Co-Chair Bishop relayed that the committee had heard the bill on March 7, 2021 and had taken public testimony.

9:05:55 AM

SENATOR JOSH REVAK, SPONSOR (via teleconference), thanked the committee. He introduced his support staff.

EMMA TORKELSON, STAFF, SENATOR JOSH REVAK, relayed that the bill leveraged federal dollars and allowed for users to fund the program. She added that the bill helped to maintain wildlife populations and promote food security across the state.

9:06:59 AM

EDDIE GRASSER, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION, DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME (via teleconference), suggested committee staff address the fiscal note.

9:07:16 AM

AT EASE

[9:07:33 AM](#)

RECONVENED

ERIN SHINE, STAFF, CO-CHAIR BISHOP, discussed the updated fiscal note from the Department of Fish and Game, OMB component 473, which reflected an updated figure of \$500 thousand for FY 23.

Senator von Imhof MOVED to report SB 22 out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

SB 22 was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Fish and Game.

[9:09:13 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:10:14 AM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Bishop introduced Rhonda Boyles.

[9:10:31 AM](#)

^Confirmation of Governor's Appointees: Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees

Rhonda Boyles
Brent Fisher
Annette Gwalthney-Jones
Anita Halterman

[9:10:36 AM](#)

RHONDA BOYLES, APPOINTEE, ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (via teleconference), discussed her background. She relayed her civic work in Fairbanks and offered a personal history of her life in Fairbanks and Anchorage. She appreciated consideration of her continued service on the board.

[9:12:44 AM](#)

Co-Chair Bishop appreciated Ms. Boyles recognition, and continued diligence in tackling, the hard work done by the board.

Ms. Boyles emphasized the importance of the work of the AMHTA Board of Trustees. She said she was anxious to continue the work of the board.

[9:13:45 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman asked for Ms. Boyles' thoughts regarding inflation-proofing the trust.

Ms. Boyles responded that inflation proofing the trust was critical and was a high priority for her.

[9:14:59 AM](#)

BRENT FISHER, APPOINTEE, ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (via teleconference), discussed his background. He discussed his military and educational background and various certifications related to healthcare. He was grateful for the opportunity to serve on the board.

Co-Chair Bishop commented that Mr. Fisher's resume was impressive.

[9:16:54 AM](#)

Senator von Imhof mentioned the 25 percent of the AMHTA budget used for administrative services. She asked whether the trust had done a peer review to consider whether 25 percent was within the typical margin for administrative expenses.

Mr. Fisher relayed that he was a new appointee and could not yet definitively answer the question. He recalled that the subject had come up in a meeting the previous month and was under consideration. He commented on the administrative expense of maintaining the trust land office.

[9:18:34 AM](#)

Co-Chair Bishop asked whether Mr. Fisher had an overarching principal that he wanted to bring to the board.

Mr. Fisher considered that the primary responsibility of the members was to ensure that trust funds were available for future beneficiaries.

[9:19:27 AM](#)

Senator Olson observed that Mr. Fisher's resume reflected a number of executive positions. He asked how Mr. Fisher's abilities would translate into budgetary issues from a trustee standpoint.

Mr. Fisher explained that part of the responsibility of the trustees was to ensure trust funds were managed well. He thought his experience as an executive directly applies to the responsibilities of a trustee. He had been in a number of positions on boards that had responsibility for trust funds. He noted that he had had numerous opportunities on several boards to take on fiduciary responsibilities.

[9:21:20 AM](#)

ANNETTE GWALTHNEY-JONES, APPOINTEE, ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (via teleconference), discussed her background. She had over 25 years of managerial experience in human resources and social services. She had worked for many beneficiary trust organizations in Anchorage. In 1992 she had become a certified emergency medical technician. She relayed that with her certification she joined the Alaska Professional Volunteers. She discussed her experience as a court appointed special advocate and her becoming a foster parent. She recalled her experiences on 9/11. She shared her experience as a military "key" spouse.

[9:26:02 AM](#)

Ms. Gwaltney-Jones continued to discuss her qualifications. She thought her experiences would be beneficial to her service on the board.

[9:28:36 AM](#)

ANITA HALTERMAN, APPOINTEE, ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (via teleconference), discussed her background. She stated that she enjoyed serving on the board and would like to continue. She mentioned her past work for the legislature. She had received a Master's

degree in Business Administration from Wayland Baptist University. She shared that she had worked extensively with the Department of Health and Social Services and had devoted her life's work to working with underserved populations. She expressed an eagerness to use her life and professional experiences to help build a mental health program that met the needs of the board's beneficiaries.

[9:34:04 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman FORWARDED the appointment(s) of Rhonda Boyles, Brent Fisher, Annette Gwalthney-Jones, and Anita Halterman for consideration in accordance with Alaska Statute. He relayed that this did not reflect an intent by any member of the Senate Finance Committee to vote for or against the confirmation of the individuals during any further sessions.

[9:34:46 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:42:11 AM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Bishop relayed that he was going to set SB 19 aside for a hearing at a later date.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[9:42:28 AM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 a.m.